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THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 1915.

Modernizing the Gas Works

THE plan of Vice-Chairman Hirschberg, of the Administrative Board, for a \$400,000 bond issue, secured by the city Gas Works, with the proceeds of which the plant and distributing system may be brought up to date, represents one way of dealing with a tangled situation—and it is by no means unlikely that it may be found to be the best way.

Whether the project can be made to fit into the general scheme of municipal finance remains to be determined, and its financial feasibility and practicality, of course, would have to be established. There can be little question, however, that unless the city is going to lease the Gas Works, some provision must be made for modernizing them. The city, as the owner of a considerable public utility, should not be content with defective appliances and unsatisfactory service. Reduction in the price of gas to 75 cents per 1,000 cubic feet is a pleasant prospect also.

Under all the circumstances, we hope Mr. Hirschberg's plan will meet with the consideration it deserves.

Health and Education

ONE portion of Mayor Ahlstedt's report is cheerful reading and interesting, too. It is gratifying to learn that Richmond is a healthy city. In some particulars the progress has been notable.

Time was when Richmond enjoyed a bad reputation for typhoid fever, the number of cases every summer was large. Some blamed it on the yellow water, and others on other causes, but the fact was that typhoid was expected to ravage us each summer and autumn. All that is changed now. Deaths from typhoid numbered fourteen last year as against an average of seventy-seven in the old days. This result is due to the efforts of the State and city Health Departments, which have used all the equipment of science to fight the dread disease. The rate of deaths from other diseases was also small.

Progress was notable in other directions. New schools to the value of \$210,000 were opened and the existing schools were improved. Richmond now has one of the best public school systems in the South.

A Gratifying Announcement

THERE will be general relief in the announcement that the investigation of the Police Department, now in progress, is not to be unduly prolonged, and that three, or, at the most, four additional sessions will see the end of it. This statement comes as a pleasant surprise to that considerable element of the community that feared a long-drawn-out inquiry, redolent of scandal and mud.

From the time the first report of the Vice Commission was filed with the Mayor, a police investigation was demanded. It would have been impossible for Richmond to rest satisfied, unless the charges and suggestions of police laxity and inefficiency, that the report contained, were sifted to the bottom. That sifting is now in progress, through a committee which gives every evidence of desire and purpose to do its work thoroughly. The committee certainly ought not to be hurried, but there is gratification, nevertheless, in the prospect of a relatively early completion of its labors.

Richmond should derive profit from this investigation. The committee ought to be able to point out a way in which some of the old errors may be avoided and some of the old weaknesses cured. Constructive recommendations of this character will represent, indeed, the greatest service it can render. Let it clean house, if that course shall seem to be indicated, and then point out how the house can be kept clean. That is the public interest, after all.

When Is an Interview an Interview?

THAT ancient query, "When is a door not a door?" the answer to which is, "When it is a jar," has its mate in "When is an interview not an interview?" the answer to this one being identical with that of the door. The latest jar in the interview line was the statement published by Gabriel Alpaud, in Paris Temps, quoting President Wilson after what was understood to be a social visit, by introduction of Ambassador Jusserand. The interview was not of first importance, even if authorized, but, as it dealt with European affairs as well as Mexican, its publication was not considered by the President to have been in good taste. Hence, although he may have said everything precisely as quoted, officially he said not a word. So far as the Paris Temps is concerned, Secretary Alpaud did not even see the President.

That the publication of whatever the President might have said was a misunderstanding is the best way to dismiss the matter. Doubtless, Alpaud is a man of absolute integrity, and would no more violate the ethics of a personal visit than the average American newspaperman would betray a confidence. Possibly he was inspired by the success of such war correspondents as Von Wiegand, in obtaining interviews with

royalty, and sought to do the same trick on this side of the water, in view of our position with reference to possible peace. He surely thought he had a great journalistic coup, and his professional zeal may have overshadowed caution.

In matters of moment, it appears to us that an interview is not an interview until the copy, or proof, has been submitted to and finally O. K'd by the interviewed person. To record comments in ordinary circumstances requires no such great caution, but where such vital points are involved as in this case, it would seem to many American writers that Alpaud should have submitted his written copy before cabling. As he did not, the incident may be passed over without discredit to Alpaud, and without committing President Wilson to any of the quoted remarks.

Spring Offensive of the Allies

REPORTS from London that the allies in the west are awaiting the issue of the Russian onslaughts in the Carpathians and on the Hungarian plain, and that the long-talked-of spring offensive in France and Flanders may be abandoned, make strange reading. It is difficult to credit that there will be such complete reversal of allied policy, which only considerations of commanding potency would authorize.

Despite British gains at Neuve Chapelle and French advances east of Verdun and around St. Mihiel, the Germans are yet in possession of nearly one-sixth of France and of nearly the whole of Belgium. For months allied hopes have pointed to the spring, and been upheld by promises that clearing weather would be followed by a vigorous offensive. The enormous sacrifices that have been made by the French people, as well as by the Belgians, have been borne in the expectation that an earnest attempt was to be made to drive the invader from their soil.

Expectations of this kind will not be quieted by Russian successes in the east, however considerable. The French or Belgian peasant, driven from his farm and fighting for his country, will derive only vicarious satisfaction from the announcement that the plains of Hungary or some sections of East Prussia have been overrun by Russian arms. His passion is for victory somewhat nearer home.

Abandonment of the western offensive would involve a heavy blow to allied prestige. It would be in a sense a confession of weakness. It would mean that the reinforcements that have been brought up by the French and the landing in France of enormous detachments of Kitchener's new army had served merely to preserve the balance of the contending forces, on that long battle line which stretches from Switzerland to the sea. The British leader's famous statement, that "the war will begin in May," would gain the undesirable notoriety of an exploded prophecy.

It is all scarce credible, on the basis of such understanding of the situation as we on this side the ocean may derive from the visible facts. The theory might gain support from the tremendous British hullabaloo over the liquor problem and the shortage of munitions alleged to result therefrom, did not the world remember a similar outcry six months ago over the alleged slackness in enlistments. Despite that almost hysterical performance, Britain has raised, equipped and trained a volunteer army of 2,000,000 men—an exploit scarce paralleled within a like time in the history of civilized war. Remembering this, most persons will be inclined to take the ammunition row with several grains of salt.

The fact is, the London announcement that the proposed offensive in France and Flanders may be abandoned is a little bit too public and ingenuous. The liquor and ammunition furore wears something of the same aspect. Both appear designed to encourage the German purpose to withdraw troops from the west to assist the harried Austrians in the east. If in the next month there is revealed no aggressive purpose to break through the fortified line the Kaiser has erected, the world will be astonished, and allied hopes seriously depressed.

Business Barometer Rising

BUSINESS depression or revival is usually pretty well indicated in the rise or fall of stocks. We have seen several years of great depression in the stock market, accompanied by bad business conditions generally. On July 31, 1914, when the New York Stock Exchange was closed, the situation seemed desperate. The exchange was shut up to prevent the swamping of the market by the selling of American stocks held abroad.

But the exchange has now been open for some time, and the last restrictions on trading were recently removed. In view of these facts, it is most encouraging to see that American stocks show a steady tendency to rise, in spite of the war—perhaps, indeed, on account of the war. European liquidation seems about over, for many Europeans are holding on to their American securities as the one safe form of investment in war time. Steel common rose Monday to 59 1/2. Bethlehem Steel rose to 92. If conditions in the steel trade improve, as is likely, both United States Steel Company and Bethlehem Steel shares should rise to about their ordinary level.

It was reported in New York that the public was buying stocks more heavily than at any time since the exchange reopened. That the public is buying stocks at the present bargain prices is the best financial sign of the times. It shows conclusively that the American people are beginning to recover from their recent distrust of American securities.

The woman Mayor of Tyro, Kans., has been defeated for re-election, and with her five women candidates for the City Council. Reactionaries may find in this circumstance excuse for the reflection that the town is not as much of a Tyro as it would appear at first sight.

Gentle spring, whose annual visit to this part of the world has been postponed by frost, blizzards, washouts on the line and other discouraging obstacles, is at last in our midst. Everybody ought to encourage her to linger by trying to make her stay pleasant.

Elihu Root says New York Republicans must show their devotion to conservation. They have already displayed their determination to collect and hang onto all the offices in sight—and even to create a few for worthy workers for the cause.

The fact that Chicago women voted two to one for the Republican candidate for Mayor makes us exceedingly doubtful of the benefits of woman suffrage. This record reveals an almost fatal lack of political discrimination.

SONGS AND SAWS

Too Late.
The baseball days have come around—
The gladdest of the year—
When say youth frolics on the mound
And lams the horseshoe sphere.

On every lot a game is staged
And fought with zeal and zest
The diamond battles that are waged
Put science to the test.

But, oh! how painful is the pang
When aged players try
That self-same horseshoe sphere to whang
As it goes scooting by!

The Peasantry Say:
It is easy enough to be captain of your soul
When there is nothing much to worry about.
The real test is a combination of bankruptcy
and toothache.

Impossible to Say More.
She—Would you give up everything for me?
He—Of course I would. I am willing even to give up the estate of single blessedness.

Helping Along Destiny.
The Practical Philanthropist confessed himself somewhat puzzled to find the proper response to the appeal of the peripatetic mendicant. There was difficulty, he found, in deciding on just the right way to meet the situation. At last his brow cleared.

"There, my good man," he said, "is a street car ticket. All the cars going south will take you direct to the river."

A Trifling Error.
Sergeant—Here there! What are you trying to shoot at—the sun?
Near-sighted Private—Don't disturb me. I am just getting a line on one of the enemy's aeroplanes.

Sergeant—Aeroplane nothing! That fly you are aiming at is only about two feet from the muzzle of your rifle.

Proficient.
"While I don't like to praise myself,"
Said Mr. Always Tired,
"The skill I show in dodging work,
I feel, is quite inspired."
THE TATTLEB.

Chats With Virginia Editors

The Alexandria Gazette, reviewing the history of the prize ring from "way back down to the present," declares: "A large percentage of the world look upon such procedures as brutal, and the fact that the authorities forbid the exhibition of pictures of prize fights shows that the public arena is not appealing as it did in the days of our grandfathers." Then how are we to explain the enormous extra sale of newspapers containing the news just from the ringside?

The Norfolk Virginian-Pilot says: "Billy Sunday says that after a man passes fifty years there is but one chance in a thousand for him to get religion, and yet Nature generally sees to it that one who has reached the half-century mark must be good, whether he will or not." Billy Sunday and Nature both seem to know their business pretty well.

Calamity howlers are evidently getting too thick in some parts of Southwest Virginia, and this leads the Bristol Herald-Courier to remark: "Edward D. Easton, president of the Columbia Graphophone Company, has hit the calamity howlers a considerable jolt. Of course they will recover their breath and continue to howl in dismal and discordant chorus, but every right swing to the jaw like that of Mr. Easton makes their task less agreeable and more difficult. Even a calamity howler doesn't want to be pounded to a pulp, and ordinarily he doesn't like to believe that he is casting his pearls of pessimism before a skeptical and therefore unappreciative public."

The Harrisonburg Record-News, referring to the fact that an outside life insurance agent "fell down" on business in that town because the people there preferred to patronize home enterprise, says: "We commend our good old town for having that spirit. No man can ask any other man to deal in Harrisonburg unless Harrisonburg can offer him as good terms as he gets elsewhere. But when Harrisonburg can offer him such terms, it is duty bound to deal there. And the fact that there is a recognition of this duty, a duty that is owing both to the individual and the community, is matter for congratulation. That's the Harrisonburg spirit, and more power and honor to it!"

The day after the prize fight the Newport News Times-Herald exclaimed: "The extra edition of the Times-Herald yesterday had the largest sale of any extra in the history of the paper. What do you think of that?" Simply that Newport News does not on a vigorous and vigorous festive encounter.

Current Editorial Comment

Big Task Awaits Humanity
An even bigger job awaits humanity in the wake of the war in Europe than was expected. It was humanly impossible to foresee exactly what would result in way of destitution and destruction, but the blackest picture that was painted in advance of the fact is now being outdone. The work of feeding the destitute in Europe increases with each day, as the store of food in the devastated regions slowly disappears, while the dread of an epidemic of deadly disease grows with the immensity of spring weather. The horror of the war is even greater in realization than it was in anticipation. The United States is the one source of relief on which the innocent sufferers can rely; from here must be supplied the food and raiment, the medicine and nursing that are needed for the salvation of those who cannot otherwise help themselves. The task is ours, and we must not waver in the work; it is a duty of which we should be proud—Omaha Bee.

Some More Scraps of Paper
A learned Eastern physician has proposed that we cut out paper plates and wear paper underwear, in the interest of sanitation. Nobody knows and statistics, do, not show, he writes.

"How many epidemics have been spread by imperfectly cleaned cups or plates. Hospitals have begun to dip them, after washing, into an antiseptic solution to kill the germs." After the champagne and the undisturbed have been used once, he says, they should be burned. Why not carry the learned gentleman's theory two or three steps further and use paper bedsteads, paper comforters, paper paper hats, paper whisks, paper in paper houses, introduce paper cuspidors and kiss paper babies—all to be burned after using? These germ-chasing doctors must quit kidding us—or themselves—or they'll drive us all to a germless Christian Science.—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

The Death Chair vs. Gallows
There are very few questions that may not come up for decision by the Supreme Court of the United States. Soon or later the relative humanity of the electric death chair and the old-time gallows was bound to get into that final tribunal. Now the decision is that the death chair is the more humane or the less inhuman of the two. "Cruel and unusual punishments" are prohibited by the nation's Constitution, "not cruel or unusual punishments." A charged conjunction would have ended Delaware's whipping post a century ago, and would have prevented the use of electricity to kill murderers. But the case just settled was one coming up from South Carolina, and was based on the prohibition of ex post facto legislation. After the crime a new law substituted electricity

for hanging. The offender pleaded that a harsher penalty had been imposed. His plea is overruled. Precisely analogous was a case decided by the court of last resort in North Carolina long before the Civil War. A crime punishable by hanging had been taken off the list of capital offenses, and when a convict been made the penalty. The convicted person, a white man, demanded the right to be hanged, instead of being whipped, because that was the way the law stood when his crime was committed. The court held that whipping was harsher than hanging; that the increased penalty was ex post facto legislation; but we believe a pardon saved the accused from the death his lawyer had been courting on his behalf.—Brooklyn Eagle.

To Prevent Misuse of Flag
The Netherlands government has enacted a law providing that any foreign vessel which displays the flag of the Netherlands or uses other means to make a pretense of possessing Dutch nationality will not be allowed to depart from or land at any port under jurisdiction of the Netherlands. The United States should enact a similar law for the protection of the American flag and American shipping. At present there is no prohibition against the misuse of the American flag by foreigners. Any foreign vessel may fraudulently display the American colors. A single instance of such misuse would do no harm, but the persistent display of the American flag by foreign vessels would lead to confusion. It is a disgrace to our country that American flag is being used by foreigners to masquerade as Americans, and thus American ships might be sunk. The United States protested to the British government against the general use of the American flag by British merchant vessels and the practice was stopped. It may be resumed at any time, however, by any of the belligerents, and there should be a penalty provided which will make it very costly to any foreign vessel wrongfully displaying the American emblem. Such vessels should be excluded from American ports and from the Panama Canal. If they persist in misusing the flag, the vessels should be confiscated if the flag is under American jurisdiction.—Washington Post.

War News Fifty Years Ago
(From Old Files, April 8, 1865.)
The Washington National Republican of yesterday says the very latest from the front is a well-authenticated report that General Sheridan attacked and defeated a portion of General Lee's army the day before at Burke's Station, capturing Generals Ewell, Kershaw, Button, Corse and many general officers and several thousand prisoners. It also says that Sheridan expresses the belief that he will force General Lee to surrender. The Spotswood Hotel is overflowing with guests.
D. B. Parker, special agent of the Post-Office Department of the United States, has taken possession of the Richmond post-office, and is rapidly getting matters in shape.
A Federal officer from City Point who reached here last night confirmed the rumor of the capture by Sheridan of Lieutenant-General Ewell, Major-General Custis Lee and Kershaw. No mention was made of the capture of General Corse.
An informal meeting of citizens was held last night, which was also attended by quite a number of the members of the Legislature, the object being to hear from Judge Campbell the terms upon which President Lincoln had expressed himself as willing that Virginia should return to the Union. Joseph B. Anderson, David I. Burr, Nathaniel P. Tyler and H. W. Thomas were appointed a committee to inform the Legislature and Governor Smith of Mr. Lincoln's terms, and Judge Campbell was requested to accompany the committee, who were to leave the city as soon as passports could be procured. They will probably leave to-day.

The Baltimore American of yesterday says Confederate General M. Jeff Thompson still has a considerable Confederate force in Arkansas, and is striving by all manner of means to enlarge it by May list for active warfare in the trans-Mississippi.

Mayor W. W. Towns, D'Arcy Paul and Charles P. Collier constituted the committee formally surrendered the city of Petersburg to General Grant.

The steamer Harriet Deford, plying on the waters of the Chesapeake Bay between Baltimore and the Eastern Shore of Virginia, was captured a few days ago at Fairhaven by a band of determined Confederates.

The report comes from Washington that Roscoe G. Greene, formerly a prosperous merchant of Richmond, will be appointed postmaster for this city.

Mr. Davis, the members of his Cabinet and other Confederate government officers are in Danville, and one of the handsome private residences of that town is now the Confederate Capital.

Queries and Answers
Lightning Rods.
Is there any firm in Richmond that handles lightning rods? If so, state the address.
O. S. ANDERSON.
We know of no such firm here, and could not give the address in this column if we did.

Georgia Governor.
When does the new Governor of Georgia take office?
A. M. G.
July 1st.

A Date.
Please tell me what day of the week was April 1, 1899.
MISS J. J.
Saturday.

Insurance.
Please tell me what an "Automatic premium loan" is.
X. X.
A loan provided for by the terms of the policy—hence "Automatic"—which can be drawn in the policy is applied to payment of premium and keeping the policy "alive."

The University of Virginia.
Please tell me who was a professor of moral philosophy at the university in 1837.
OLD-TIMER.
George Tucker.

Justice Wanted.
"He's suing the company that constructed the artificial limbs."
"On what grounds?"
"Non-support."—Buffalo Express.

A Laundry That Failed.
A weary looking hobo rambled up the garden walk of a suburban home and meekly tapped on the back door.
"Lady," he remarked, almost tearfully, "I don't want you to think I'm a tramp. Until a few weeks ago I had a good hand laundry, but it failed me, and since then I have hardly had enough to eat."

"That is too bad," responded the good woman, as she began to hand the hobo sandwiches. "How did the laundry come to fail you?"
"Well, my lady," answered the tramp, stuffing the folder in his pocket and starting for the gate. "She got tired of workin' and went home to her mother."—Philadelphia Telegraph.

For Identification Purposes Only.
"Gentlemen," began the speaker, thus putting himself in rapport with his auditors, after uttering a pale white lie.
"Gentlemen," he repeated, thus rubbing it in, "I desire to call your kind attention to the four poems I am about to recite."
A sub rosa crown escaped the tethered audience.

Only the first of these poems," announced the speaker, "is mine. The other three are by Longfellow."

With an audible sigh of relief, the audience settled back, prepared to endure the worst.—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC POSITION

One of the Day's Best Cartoons.



From the Nashville Tennessean.

HARVESTER TRUST DECISION AWAITED

WASHINGTON, April 5.—The fight in the Supreme Court of the United States over the "Harvester Trust" is now expected to be the most important antitrust contest before that tribunal since the Standard Oil and Tobacco decisions in 1911.

Oral arguments will be heard by the court on Wednesday and Thursday. Briefs outlining the arguments to be made have already been filed in court.

On the one hand the government is asking for a reconsideration and for a new construction of the Sherman antitrust law. On the other the International Harvester Company is seeking a clean bill of health as a "good trust"—a creation often mentioned by the Supreme Court, but never introduced by the government. The decision announced by the court in the background, states the mooted question of whether ex-President Roosevelt was right in his administration against the company, or ex-President Taft was correct in instituting the suit—a question which some say has a scarier political significance in its day than any other antitrust suit ever brought.

The brief filed by Attorney-General Gregory and his subordinates shows a bold and new battle-front against combinations. The decision announced by the Supreme Court in the Standard Oil and Tobacco cases are subordinated, as a new campaign against big corporations is given almost exclusive attention by the government attorneys.

History of the Litigation.
To appreciate the charges, the entire history of the litigation against the Harvester Company must be studied. This litigation was begun by the filing in the District Court for the United States in St. Louis, a petition asking for the dissolution of the International Harvester Company. That petition was filed by Attorney-General Wickesham. Within less than a year, he had won the Standard Oil and Tobacco cases in the Supreme Court. He patterned the suit in the Harvester case along the lines on which the Supreme Court had accorded him victory over the Standard Oil and Tobacco.

In the Harvester case, the International Harvester Company is being asked to show the illegality of its combination shown by its acts to have been organized for an unlawful purpose, namely, unreasonable restraint of trade. He specified the acts he would prove as showing the illegal purpose. These acts characterized his attack just as certain acts of the Standard Oil and Tobacco companies characterized the decisions against them.

The plaintiff's argument, or brief, submitted to the District Court by the government in support of dissolution, bore the name of Attorney-General Wickesham, who had succeeded Mr. Wickesham. Mr. Wickesham had conducted the tobacco suit. Naturally, he was asked for a decision against the Harvester Company on the grounds on which he won in the tobacco case, and, which, of course, the same grounds taken by Attorney-General Wickesham in the petition.

What Attorney-General Gregory Asks.
Now Attorney-General Gregory is asking for another complete review of the legislative history of trust laws, and that the court lay down the doctrine that a combination of competitive traders occupying a preponderant position in the market in a business, as described above, is a violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust law, regardless of its acts.

The change is not generally regarded as a more attempt at novelty on the part of the government, but rather as an adroitly spun web of argument, calculated to avoid the necessity of meeting the issue of "good" and "bad" trusts. In other words, the phrase "unreasonable restraint of trade" found in the Standard Oil and Tobacco decisions to have been forbidden by the Sherman law, would be construed as having applied to all combinations, large or small, rather than to goodness or badness, as the Supreme Court has not approved the theory advanced by the government, for the very good reason, at least, that in no case hitherto has the government rested its argument upon it. Chief Justice White seemingly had it in mind in the Standard Oil case, but the government and the attorneys for the Harvester Company differ as to the effect of what he said then.

"The unification of power and control," said the Chief Justice in the Standard Oil case, "over petroleum and its products, and the consequent increase of the power of the Standard Oil Company by the increase of its stock and the transfer to it of the stocks of so many other corporations, aggregating so vast a capital, gives rise, in and of itself, in the absence of countervailing circumstances to say the least, to the prima facie presumption of intent and purpose to maintain the monopoly." The government contends that the important words in this quotation are "in and of itself," while the Harvester Company can see nothing but the words "in the absence of countervailing circumstances."

Chief Justice White's View.
In the Standard Oil case the court did not stop with the preponderance of the Standard Oil combination, or combination. Chief Justice White said that the presumption arising therefrom was made conclusive by considering first the fact that the Standard Oil Company was created to create an oil trust long years before, and second, the modes in which the power of the combination was exerted and the results arising therefrom.

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued,
Against the deep damnation of his taking-off."

Interest in the Outcome.

The interest in the outcome is far from being limited to the participants in the case. The government contends that the doctrine advanced by the Harvester Company, namely, that the case must fail because the combination has not increased prices, limited production, degraded the quality of the product, decreased wages, decreased the price of raw materials, or oppressed competition, would be utterly impracticable in execution. The public is interested in that statement.